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THE USE OF AUTHOR ROLES IN IMPROVING TEXTBOOKS AND LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

All language use, including written school language, is rhetorical and communicative, and both composing and reading textbooks are rhetorical situations that include interactions and transactions. One issue concerning text characteristics is whether the diverse parts that authors play influence how students learn from their books and respond to the text. Throughout history the roles considered appropriate for authors have changed and converged, and views of authorship also vary from one discipline to another. If a continuum were developed for instructional texts, at one end would be unauthored textbooks produced by publishers, editors, and educators--authorities in the field--that contain canonical knowledge and beliefs, while at the other end would be single-authored textbooks in which the author takes a point of view. Textbook authors and publishers and curriculum designers must be concerned with style as well as content if they wish to present students with accessible, effective texts. Since 1930 most textbooks have been written in the same mode, "textbookese"--an emotionless writing style with the author flattened out by use of the third person, "objective" point of view. If learning is to improve, (1) authors must write natural texts, (2) authors must become storytellers for content-area textbooks, (3) curriculum designers must plan for multiple texts on a single topic, and (4) textbooks must have real authors rather than committees of developers. (NKA)

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Abstract

As part of an effort to improve textbooks used in schools, this paper examines the role of the author. At times and in some periods but not in others, the author has been the dominant element in books. This is not true in today's textbooks which are composed in third person with a flat objectivity. Despite the fact that researchers have different views of language depending on their discipline, all language is rhetorical and communicative, including that used in textbooks, and involves interaction between readers and writers. There are many questions about the nature of language and the effect of language and text on readers and learning. Educational psychologists have studied the characteristics of learners and their interaction with the text, but they have not investigated the function of the author. This paper discusses the author's voice as analyzed by specialists in different fields, particularly rhetoricians and literary critics. It also looks at the various roles the author can play, specifically the author's stance or point of view and the author's commentary, and discusses the effect of these on learners. It concludes with recommendations to authors, textbook publishers and educators who are serious about improving learning.

The Use of Author Roles in Improving Textbooks and Learning

Although text characteristics include layout and graphics, texts are composed of written language, and many of the important questions about the effects of the text on learning depend on how the researcher views the nature of language and the role of authors in composing texts. A view of language depends on the researcher's discipline and also on whether the interest is in general or in school language (Halliday, 1974). As Halliday suggests, educational psychologists, for instance, view school language as expressing knowledge and are interested in the conceptual, ideational aspect--the understanding or production of ideas--and in the perceptual, graphic aspects. Sociologists and anthropologists view both general and school language as behavior and are interested in the social, interpersonal, situational aspects of it. Linguists view languages as system, while literary scholars view it as art.

Halliday's description of the various discipline-specific perspectives on language does not take into account the discipline of rhetoric, but rhetoricians would, no doubt, include themselves in the set of disciplines that view general and school language as interpersonal, social behavior. For rhetoricians, all language is a situated, communicative framework that includes author, text, reader or learner, and the world as elements, along with their interactions. They believe that if one element is altered, the others will necessarily be as well. This creates a new rhetorical and learning situation with different effects on the learner, depending on which element was dominant (Abrams, 1953). Throughout history the author

has been dominant in some periods but not others. The main point of this paper is that a rhetorical situation with the author as the dominant element in a textbook has consequences for learners reading that textbook.

The view presented here is that all language use, including written school language, is rhetorical and communicative and that both composing and reading textbooks are rhetorical situations that include interactions and transactions. This raises some important issues concerning the different functions of language, text characteristics and their effect on learners, as well as how readers learn from texts.

A model of learning that has been developed and used by educational researchers to investigate reading (Brown, Campione & Day, 1981; Jenkins, 1979) has four components: learner characteristics, the learning activities engaged in by the learner, the task used to assess and measure student performance, and the nature of the materials. These have been investigated separately for the most part; now there is increased study of the interactions among the components.

Educational psychologists have typically studied learners' mental abilities and background knowledge of content, text structure, and reading strategies. They have been interested in the relationship of knowledge, with characteristics of the learner, as well as the task, activities, and the nature of the text. They have not been much interested in the learners' attitude, personality traits, and temporary mental states or the interaction of these with the task, and other components. While they have investigated text characteristics, including structure and logical content, coherence, and cohesion and the interactions of these with certain learner

characteristics, they have not investigated the author as a factor in the text nor the social interactions between author and reader as they relate to reading.

One issue concerning text characteristics then is whether the various roles that authors play influence how students learn from their books and respond to the text. An author can take the role of an objective reporter or a friendly companion to the reader, for instance, and these roles may make a difference in the reader's reactions. How important are authorship and differing authors' roles for trying to understand the nature of cognitive processing during textbook reading and learning? Or for trying to understand reader's responses to textbooks? These are important questions for researchers, textbook authors, and publishers.

Improving the quality of textbooks is a worthy goal, and information gathered by investigating the effects of author roles on readers' responses can be used for developing guidelines to improve them. The issue of authorship is especially relevant for investigating the rhetorical text characteristic, metadiscourse (an author's discoursing about the discourse), and what effect it has on learners. Metadiscourse represents the interpersonal function of language and the role of the author as commentator on the text and guide for the reader. An author using metadiscourse displays an authorial stance in the text. As mentioned previously, how theorists, researchers, and teachers view this role and metadiscourse depends on their discipline's view of language and the view of the particular tradition within that discipline from which they come. Viewpoints and author roles also change over time.

The rest of this paper first describes the cycles of roles considered appropriate for authors which have occurred throughout history from the perspectives of rhetorical theory and literary and film theory as examples of two perspectives. It points out that these traditions seem now to be converging in their views of author roles and authorial stance. It then discusses how the roles that authors take in their writing determine the voice they use and what they inject into the text besides the content. Finally, it discusses the implications of authorial stance for readers, teachers, textbook authors, and researchers.

Historical Views of the Role of the Author

Readers can play a variety of roles as they read a text (Purves, 1984). Clearly, authors, too, play different roles as they write, but the role of the author in the communicative, learning process is controversial. Views of authorship vary from one discipline to another and, within a discipline, from one historical period to another or during any one period because of differing cultures, beliefs, or inquiry systems. In order to understand the authorship issue, it may be helpful to examine the evaluation of the roles of an author from the perspectives first of rhetorical theory and next of literary and film theory.

Views from Rhetorical Theory

Classical period. The field of rhetoric has had different views of the role of the speaker (author) over the centuries (Golden, Berquist, & Coleman, 1976). During the classical period, the central concern for Aristotle and his followers was the development of the syntax of the speech act. These rhetoricians determined what the act of speaking entailed and

devised a grammar for telling about its parts and their relationship. They divided the speech act into the three component functional parts of speaker, speech, and audience-occasion, and speculated upon the relative importance of each of these parts in determining the success of the whole. But the role of the speaker was controversial even then.

A speaker could be seen three ways; as someone who influences his listeners as a passive person receiving a stimulus from the audience, or as an interacter. The Sophist rhetoricians saw the speaker as influencer and rhetoric to be a univariate, linear process. Plato and Aristotle viewed the speaker (author), speech, and audience as all wrapped up together. The speaker interacted, and rhetoric was the counterpart of dialectic, a muitivariate process. Aristotle (1954) believed there were three ways to make something comprehensible and credible: (a) by the character and personality of the speaker as it comes out in the speech/text, rather than in the real person (ethos); (b) by the disposition of the audience toward the speaker and speech (pathos); and (c) by the speech itself (logos). The three ways were distinguishable but not separable; there could be no ethos without pathos, no pathos without ethos, and logos involved both.

Seventeenth and eighteenth century period. While the rhetoric of the classical period stressed the grammatical, the rhetoric of the eighteenth center stressed the psychological. British rhetoricians of this period worked out sophisticated statements of the relationships between the speech act or text and the mind of the listener/reader. In this period, shaped by John Locke and other British empiricists and academic psychologists, the new rhetoricians used an epistemological rather than a grammatical or

logical starting point (Golden, Berquist, & Coleman, 1976). Perhaps going back to Longinus' "On the Subline," they approached rhetoric by analyzing the mind of the listener or reader and were thus audience centered. They used an approach which classified discourse in terms of the effect that the speaker or author sought to have on the listener or reader. Some rhetoricians focused on the speaker-listener relationship while others were preoccupied with the text-mind relationship, but they did not attempt to talk about the speech act and its parts and their relationships or to examine the role that practical texts play in society. In this period the role of the author was less important than that of the text and the mind of the listener/reader.

Modern period. The rhetoric of the third period, the modern period, can best be described as sociological, since it views rhetoric as an instrument for understanding and improving human relations. Through the process of identification (of speaker and listener, author and reader, or characters in the text and reader, for example) rhetoric can promote peace, correct divisiveness, and throw light on human relations and motives, according to one group of rhetoricians (Burke, 1950).

For another group, rhetoric can be defined as the study of the causes and remedies of misunderstanding, and its concern is with comprehending meaning (Richards, 1965). But for other rhetoricians it can be defined as the study of values and ethics (Golden, Berquist, & Coleman, 1976). They admit that there can be no communication without meaning and, therefore, without a text but argue that it is the relationship of speaker/author to listener/reader through the text which seems to be most important in

determining the rhetorical situation. The text itself is of minor importance.

Numerous scientific studies (Anderson & Clevenger, Jr., 1963) lend support to the notion that a speaker's/author's ethos or personality has an enormous effect. It is clear that most classical and contemporary rhetoricians view the role of the author as interactive and an important aspect of the text itself. The psychologically and meaning-oriented rhetoricians, however, consider the role of the author as rather minor compared to the text's content and the mind of the listener/reader. For them, the concern is with the ideational and textual functions of language--how do texts convey and readers comprehend information--but not the interpersonal functions. The traditional (and now contemporary) concern of rhetoricians has been how texts persuade as they inform. For this concern, the role of the author is crucial.

Views from literacy and film theory. According to the literary and film critics, institutionalized literary criticism has now replaced the discipline of rhetoric, and over the last one hundred and fifty years the author and criticism have developed together. Literary criticism depends on and sustains the author since its task is to construct, interpret, and understand the author (Heath, 1972).

However, many modern literary/film critics challenge the concept of author as source and center of the text. As a result, the new critics see the text as an autonomous product, with the meaning in the text and not in the author (Brooks & Warren, 1943, 1960). Some film critics, however, view the text as a structured interaction of forces, relations, and

discourse, rather than a product containing final, unified meanings created by an author.

These film critics view the text as a process which has certain structures of discourse, rather than the self-expression and personality of its author. The function of such a criticism is not to discover and construct the author, but to discover the history and the organization which is the foundation for the text and the relationship of these to audiences. Authorship theory now is also concerned with the position of an author within specific institutional, social, and political situations and it examines how an author functions as a figure within the rhetoric of the text and how readers use this figure (whether functional, constructed, or actual) in their reading--for their learning and for their pleasure (Coughie, 1981). The modern critics, then, turn their attention to text as object or process, investigating discourse structure, effects of situational contexts, and audience relationships, rather than to the author.

These different views of the role of the author and its importance have evolved over the years. Until the latter half of the eighteenth century, the author was seen as a mirror, reflecting nature. The role of the author was to make works of art according to universal standards of excellence; thus, there was limited theoretical room for personal traits or comments to intrude. Practical criticism was concerned with the text itself: how it related to the world it reflected, to the rules of writing, and to the characteristics of the reading audience. The text and the

reader had dominant roles during this period, as if the author was a guest, playing only a minor role in the work (Abrams, 1953).

With Romanticism came the emphasis on natural genius, creativity, personality, individualism, and expression of feeling and state of mind. The notion that the unity of a text was produced by the author's personality was central. Unity depended on the author as the originator of the text. As source, the author produced closed rather than open units of discourse which readers could interact with to produce author/reader negotiated meanings. In this period, the author was seen as a lamp, a radiant projector that contributed to the object (the text) it perceived.

Like the Freudians in the twentieth century, the critics in the early nineteenth century used the text as an index to the personality of the author, and the communicative, aesthetic qualities of the text were regarded as projecting the author's personality. A "living" or experiential reading of a text by a reader resulted in learning and aesthetic pleasure. This was made possible by the fineness of the author's personality, sincerity, considerateness, integrity, and seriousness (what classical rhetoricians called ethos) glimpsed in and between the lines of the text. This correlation of the style of a text and the author's mind, character, and skill, had also appeared in classical rhetoric, primarily in the work of Longinus. To understand and value the text, one had to understand and value the author's personal qualities.

Recently, however, post-structuralist literary critics and some film critics have found difficulties with these Romantic authorship theories. They object to using author personality and individuality as a test of

value for texts for several reasons. An author could, for instance, write a highly personalized text and yet be a bad author, as the Romantics also admit (Buscombe, 1973). In addition, they note that not all texts (e.g., documentary, educational, medical, and collaboratively written texts) have a single, apparent author; nor do all readers demand it, surrounded as they are by an array of discourses such as television, radio, and films where the sense of the author is absent.

The assumptions and models of authorship are closely connected with books. Although Nobel prizes are given to authors who are outstanding scientists, many scientists do not compose or write books--they produce them. The validity of science is that it is assumed as being without an author, in contrast to the humanities. The task for scientists is to give general, not particular, demonstrations and reflections of reality--to be mirrors and not lamps (Heath, 1981).

Critics like Heath argue further that the author is constituted only in language, so the language speaks, not the author. A language, they note, is by definition social, not individual; however, language is, of course, not the same as text, for larger units of discourse do provide more freedom for author individuality and style. The use of the notion of author involves examining the unity of the text but not examining it for ideology. Texts, they believe, should be studied for a theory of subject or content that looks at unconscious structures and constraints and outside effects, rather than for a theory of authorship looking at personality, creativity, and independent intention (Heath, 1981).

Booth's (1961) concept of the "implied author" draws attention to the author as a fiction, in that the real author assumes a mask or voice when he writes. The consequence is that the author's own personality is not related to or responsible for the interpretations a reader may derive from the work itself. Heath suggests that a way to integrate the various authorship theories, perhaps, is to have the author return as a fiction (but as a fiction with functions different from Booth's), a construction made up of a variety of elements--a metaphorical figure who can enhance learning and pleasure. When both author and reader become part of the activity, a text could then be defined as the space where subject, fictional author, reader and the process of making sense (meaning), occurs (Heath, 1981), paralleling Halliday's (1973) ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of language in spoken and written texts.

The Romantic conception of the author's role as unifying the text is seen today in the "auteur" (authorship) theories of film critics (Sarris, 1962; Wood, 1971). The director as "auteur" (author) plays a primary role, the influencer and unifier, but the reader plays no role at all. Not all critics, however, view the author's roles so narrowly and ignore the reader. Some non-Romantic critics see the author as a text characteristic, an important figure interacting with the reader for both learning and pleasure. Both the author and reader have important roles for these critics.

Still another group of critics sees no role at all for the author in texts, but a primary role for the reader. Barthes and his followers have developed a semiotically based "modernist criticism" that ultimately

destroys the author (Caughie, 1981). Their modernist criticism is founded on the notions of writing as practice and not simply as a transmitter of messages, and criticism is just another form of writing practice. A text, they believe, should be opened up to a variety of meanings rather than be tied down to an authorized interpretation of closed meanings. Such a view does away with the role of author as the authority and removes the author from the text. Writing is seen as the destruction of every voice, of all sources--it is a neutral, composite space where subjectivity slips away, and where all identity is lost, starting with the person writing.

Barthes (1977) points out that the author is a modern figure. The "person" of the author is a product of the same society that discovered the prestige of the individual. The notion of author, Barthes and his followers remind us, emerged from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism, and the personal faith of the Reformation. Barthes believes that to write is to substitute language itself for the person. Therefore, impersonality is a prerequisite for reaching the point where only language acts or performs. What counts is the linguistic, the essentially verbal condition of the text, not the author's self-conscious "I." Language knows a subject--not a person, and this subject holds language together.

The removal of the author, Barthes argues, results in both a distancing and a transformation of modern texts. The text is now produced and read in such a way that at all levels the author is absent and a scriptor is present. The scriptor, like the shaman or relater of ritual narratives, is a mediator, a copier, a mixer of writings who reports from

one group to another or integrates the writings of others. The scriptor producers a multi-dimensional text comprised of a variety of non-orgininal writings that blend and clash. Eco, unlike Barthes, makes distinctions among these roles (1976, 1979).

In this integrating of many dimensional writings, readers disentangle rather than decipher or make out the meanings of texts. They can follow the text structure at every point and level, but find that there is nothing beneath, that these texts can be ranged over, but not pierced. To give a text an author is to impose a limit for it closes the writing. A text with an author has a purpose, an intention the author wishes the reader to see and understand--it has fixed author meanings. To give a text a scriptor (a mediator or reporter), however, is to open up the writing and free the text of any fixed meanings, but ultimately, also to refuse reason and law. Destroying the author becomes a liberating activity, but a potentially dangerous one for the reader.

A non-personal text is a mixture made up of multiple writings of various types from various cultures. With the non-personal text the focus is on the non-personal reader (multiple readers of various types from various cultures) as its destination rather than on the author as origin (Barthes, 1977). In this view, a text's unity is produced by a non-personal reader without history, biography, or psychology--not by a personal author--and the death of the author results in the birth of the reader. According to Barthes and his group, suppressing the personal author in the interests of writing, therefore, restores the role of the

reader and this, they believe, is needed to correct the lack of attention paid to the reader by the earlier critics.

A perspective such as this results from a massive shift in literary opinion that began in the early part of this century--a shift from the nineteenth century proposition that much of literature should be personal to the proposition that literature is, or ought to be, impersonal. Leading authors and critics proposed that the progress of an artist can be charted by the extinction of the artist's personality, that novels should be written as though they were completely natural events, not human events, and that texts should be studied as autonomous objects without referring to the author's personality or intention (Wellek & Warren, 1949; Wimsatt, 1954).

Readers and authors began to rebel against the facelessness and impersonality of this literature. Now some authors flaunt personality, using the confessional and authorial intrusion style of the eighteenth century. Some scholars are now introducing a rhetorical approach to certain classes of eighteenth century literary works (and being attacked for doing this) and some readers are now, no doubt, applauding (Elliott, 1982). It is clear that the role of the author is controversial within the field of literature and that notions about the importance of the author are perhaps cyclic rather than evolutionary. Considering the role of the author in fictional texts from a rhetorical perspective brings these other aspects to light.

In summary as shown in Table 1, authors seem to have played different roles as seen from the perspective of rhetorical theory during

three different periods: (a) a dominant role as an active influencer on the audience in the classical period; (b) a secondary role as guest in the text during the late 1600s to early 1900s and (c) an interactive role as communicator in the modern period. From the perspectives of literary theory, however, the author's roles differ from those of rhetorical theorists.

According to literary theory, the author has played these roles: (a) a dominant role as creator, lamp and teller during the early 1700s and 1800s; (b) a secondary role as a creator, mirror, and fiction during the late 1800s and early 1900s; and (c) a very minor role as a value-free reporter and producer of texts during the modern period. There now seems to be a trend for the author to play a more interactive role with the reader; perhaps this signals that rhetorical and literary theories are currently converging.

The roles that an author chooses are realized in a text by the author's use of certain rhetorical devices. The next section describes two that can be used for different author roles in fiction and non-fiction texts: point of view and author commentary. These are important for understanding the concept of metadiscourse, an author's presence in a text, which might be useful for developing instructional textbooks.

Rhetorical Devices for Author Roles in Fiction and NonFiction

In this section, two techniques will be discussed by which an author can relate to the reader. The first is the use of authorial stance or point of view (the position from which the author views a subject and the grammatical person used by the author). The second is the use of author

commentary in the text. While these are usually correlated in normal texts, they are to some degree independent of one another.

Point of view. It is useful to consider fictional texts as ranging along a continuum from unauthored to authored. At one end is the unauthored folktale, a story with cumulative authorship with each narrator/author usually contributing some variation in retelling of the basic story. Although the storyteller is important, the lack of a real or implied single author for a folktale does not seem to make such difference, for the tale is authorized by folk traditions and conventions, given its author by society. Unlike the folktale, literature of unknown authorship, seems to lack authority and makes many readers uneasy. At the other end of the continuum are those authored stories where the narrator is part of the story--a figure in it or a commentator who intrudes into the story, interrupting it to comment to the reader about ideas, characters, events or the presentation of the story.

Parallel to this continuum could be one for instructional texts. At one end would be unauthored textbooks developed and produced by publishers, editors, and educators, authorities in the field, which contain canonical knowledge and beliefs. At the other end would be single-authored textbooks (usually college texts) in which the author takes a point of view (the authorial stance).

Point of view can be defined as either the mental/ideological position from which an author views a subject or the grammatical person (first, second, or third) used by the author/narrator. The grammatical person indicates the distance from and attitude toward the reader and therefore is

an index of author-reader relationship, while the mental/ideological position indicates the author's beliefs about the subject and is an index of author-subject relationships. Textbook authors, like fictional authors, can interrupt the discourse to comment on the ideas or their presentation. Figure 1 illustrates this as it relates to school textbooks and to general fiction, showing the parallel between these two types of texts.

Fictional and non-fictional techniques can be considered the art and science of communicating with readers and can help the reader grasp the text (Booth, 1961). It is possible, then, to refer to the rhetoric of fiction and the rhetoric of non-fiction. The technique or form of a text can also be defined as an information system, as well as a communications system. One theory (Moffett & McElhenny, 1966) insists that there are many possible grammatical person point-of-view techniques that index author-reader-text relationships, and that these techniques form a continuum of distances between the author and reader. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

A spectrum of fictional and non-fictional techniques can be defined. In Figure 2 the differences shown are differences of degree--categories further along the spectrum represent increasing distance between the author and his subject. What results is a trinity of first, second, and third person--I, you, and he. The three persons can be renamed as narrator, reader, and text, or informer, informed, and information. A change of one component of the three entails other changes. The distance in thought and feeling increases as the distance in time and space increases. As the focus changes from I to they, the gap widens in the information system between

author and subject and in the communication system between author and reader, as shown in Table 2 (Moffett & McElhenny, 1966).

One of the important but controversial and interesting components of Moffett and McElhenny's triangle is first person point of view narration. There are several aspects to this. On the one hand, from the perspective of authors, the use of the first person I is the most natural way to write--it is the voice one uses to tell a story to a friend. Established authors of fiction report they find it easier and quick to write in first person in their own voice and from a fixed point of view.

From the reader's perspective, the use of first person conveys a sense of immediacy, vitality, and reality. Readers report that they can more easily and rapidly engage in a less abstract reading in which the characters, events, and ideas come alive and texts become meaningful and pleasureful (Block, 1981). Some psychologists (Spiro, 1982) would argue that subjectivity in texts increases readers' long-term remembering. Given a choice, many readers also report that they usually select a book written in first person rather than one written in third person. The reason, no doubt, is that most of these readers see the first person author/narrator as looking rather like themselves. Scholars consider the identification, transference, or projection that results from reading first person narration is a vital process in understanding fiction (Block, 1981).

There are also disadvantages in using first person narration for either fiction or non-fiction. The most common problem is the tendency to tell the reader far too much about what is running through the narrator's mind. When this happens, the author may come across as a conceited bore

and thus turn off the reader. Too many informative "think-alouds" from the first person narrator, even though they are important, may slow down the narrative and cause the reader to lose interest, so that authors may have to delay incorporating them in the text or eliminate some altogether (Williams, 1981; Block, 1981).

According to Block, many professional and novice authors decide not to use first person narrative because it seems that both educational and publishing institutions do not approve of this form. The reason may be, he suggests, that use of first person is not a part of our puritan tradition. Block concludes that whatever the reason, the gatekeepers in this culture somehow consider first-person narrative unacceptable.

Author Commentary

Commentary is another rhetorical device available to an author in making texts accessible to readers. Author commentary or intrusion is an explanation that goes beyond portraying a situation in fiction to make interpretive comments about it. In author commentary, the author seems to address the reader directly, abandoning the illusion of the tale in order to deliver an announcement or an opinion (Cassill, 1981). Author commentary usually makes use of first person, but also uses second person/vocatives (You, Dear Reader), and third person (this book). The commentary is an author's means of guiding his readers in understanding both the tale and the author/narrator.

Early oral narrators like Homer often intruded into their story to tell their audience precisely what the tale would be about and what to care about. The direct guidance left the audience perfectly clear about what to

look for, fear and hope for (Booth, 1961). Early novelists also intruded into their novels with commentary. Whenever this happens, the reader finds it necessary to straddle several discourses, for the author stops telling his story in order to make general observations and comments concerning the presentation of the story. Repeated occurrences give rhythm to the novel as each comment introduces a pause in the narrative (Crossman, 1983).

Novelists like Fielding, Austin, and Eliot tried to convey the impression that there was no gap between the story and the narrator that would separate presentation from interpretation for the reader. Those like Dickens and Thackeray, however, created strong, obtrusive narrators with distinct personalities and biases who force the reader to respond to their prejudices by reading critically. The critical thinking required gives the reader alternate ways of looking at the situation.

But, critics say, it calls attention to itself and deflects it from the progress of the story. It separates presentation from interpretation by giving readers the impression of a gap between the story and the narrator (Barickman, MacDonald, & Stark, 1982). Direct and authoritative rhetoric has been renounced for several reasons by most modern authors of fiction who do not guide readers with explicit information and evaluation about the content and presentation. In order to understand why modern authors do not comment on their text it is necessary to examine the issues involved.

A clear explanation of the issues has been given by Booth (1961) who explains that many scholars and critics find the great nineteenth century author-commentators like Trallope guilty of "authorial exegesis" and lack

of artistry. Commentary in itself, especially if there is too much, is bad. Telling what happens in a story, according to these scholars, is subjective and inert, as opposed to showing which is objective and dramatic. The common aim of good modern novelists, they believe, is to immerse the reader in the situation so completely that he is unconscious of the fact that he is reading or of the identity of the author. There should be no author's parenthetical thoughts, no descriptions or narration.

What many modern novelists write, according to Booth, is a cerebral fiction where the author and reader are objective, detached, neutral and impartial. To be considered serious rather than popular, modern authors of fiction must follow these four general rules: (a) Be realistic; (b) Be objective; (c) Ignore the reader; and (d) Strip away any beliefs, emotions and self-reference from the text. An objective author, neutral to all values who attempts to report, with disinterest, on reality writes anti-rhetorical prose. The result may be that communication between this author and readers may be difficult to achieve.

Critics also suggest that author commentary is often pursued for its own sake and that it deflects readers' attention from the subject matter to the way the author handles it, possibly diminishing the authority of the story. Uninteresting or inappropriate commentary may interfere with the way readers process texts and thereby affect reader interest and attitudes.

It is important to keep in mind, though, as Booth points out, that what seems artificial today to certain literary schools of thought seemed quite natural in another period. Many early novelists like Fielding,

Eliot, Trollope and Austen considered author commentary as a natural way to use language in novels. However, it was not unusual for early modern novelists (e.g., Virginia Woolf) and critics to see language and novel writing as art and, therefore, author commentary as unnatural. Additionally, it is important not to treat author commentary as a single rhetorical device, for there are types of commentaries for different functions--those used for (a) ornament only, (b) a rhetorical purpose but not as part of the dramatic structure, and (c) a rhetorical purpose as a part of the dramatic structure.

Literary experts (Crossman, 1983; Hardy, 1959; Kiely, 1975) who have studied author commentary believe it can be advantageous for readers. Authors who use commentary control the intellectual route readers take, the progress made and the readers emotional distance. Commentary can provide readers with many kinds of facts, explanations of the meanings of text events, summaries of thought processes or significant events, and information that sets the stage for what follows. It reduces confusion and unintentional ambiguity for readers and lessens the opportunities for readers to misunderstand. And it defines for readers what they should value thus reinforcing norms, implanting new beliefs and building harmony between author and reader.

Author commentary heightens the significance of whatever is commented on. The interchapter commentary in a Tolstoy novel, for instance, serves to heighten the intensity of a particular moment in a book. Commentary controls readers' degree of involvement in or distance from the story by insuring that they view the material with the same degree of detachment or

sympathy felt by the author. Sometimes, authors also intrude to control readers' moods or emotions, to philosophize, or to comment directly on the work itself, thereby calling readers' attention explicitly to the fact that they are reading a story written down--a book as book. Authors may make comments on their own or others' writing techniques and problems.

An author's intrusions into a text are not, as Booth clearly explains, independent outbursts, but a continuing series of events or stages in a developing relationship. When great authors call attention to their work as literature and to themselves as artists, the effect achieved can be profound. The telling itself is a dramatic showing of a relationship between the author/narrator and the reader. One might speculate that the reader's feelings of admiration and affection for the author become more intense and lively with explicit, personal fiction than with implicit, impersonal fiction. The reader feels he is traveling through the book with an author who cares enough to guide him and who is trying to do justice to the subject matter. A reader can get involved with and be supportive of such an author.

Fielding's novel, Tom Jones, is used by Booth as an example. In this novel, the intrusions relate to nothing but the author and the reader. The author's comments result in a subplot--the story of the author as an entertaining traveling companion to the reader. Familiarity and intimacy increase as the reader moves through the novel, guided by the friendly author/narrator who offers wisdom, learning, and considerateness while the reader reads, keeping his mind on the main story itself, so that in the end the effect is that the book and the interesting friend are one. For this

to happen, however, the author who intrudes must somehow become an interesting person, not a dull spokesman, and must be credible as well. Interesting author/narrators perform a function in texts that nothing else can but as Booth notes, very little critical discussion of author/reader relationship and its effects exist, and it would be difficult to show how fully it influences the reader's intellectual and emotional responses to the whole text without a thorough investigation by literary experts.

Educators and researchers interested in text characteristics and their effect on learning should perhaps examine their beliefs concerning (a) the fascination with and denial of the author; (b) the fiction of the author or the author of the fiction/non-fiction; (c) the author as seat of authority, guest in the text, or mixer of writings; and (d) the author as part of the text or part of the writing-reading process. An empirical study of the effect of an author's overt presence in a text to guide and direct readers as they read would be a first step toward making informed decisions about these issues.

The roles which authors can choose when writing a text spread across a wide continuum and the choices they make determine characteristics of text. For example, selecting a role at one end of the continuum might result in autobiography while a role at the opposite end might result in a composition with a topical organization. The role an author chooses to play is the one underlying factor that affects his or her voice and the non-propositional aspects of texts. The previous sections discuss the role of the author and two rhetorical techniques, author stance/point of view

(voice) and author commentary (metadiscourse), because these techniques can be used to improve the instructional texts used in classrooms.

Implications for Improving Instructional Texts

Textbook authors and publishers and curriculum designers must be concerned with style as well as content if they wish to present students with accessible, effective texts. Style, a part of the materials, changes over the years just as does the content included and emphasized in curricula.

At the turn of the century, authors played a central role in instructional texts. Textbooks had single authors, who typically wrote readable, memorable textbooks with style and stance. They wrote because they had something to say about their subject area, and therefore, their prose style was natural, personal, opinionated, vivid, lively and interesting. Their textbooks had an atmosphere about them and left an impression on students--qualities lacking in today's textbooks but often found in books written by popular writers for general audiences (Fitz Gerald, 1979).

However, since 1930 most textbooks have been written in the same style, textbookese. This is an emotionless writing style with the author flattened out by use of the third person, "objective" point of view. According to Fitz Gerald students find this style boring, difficult to comprehend, remember and critically evaluate. Authors clearly have opinions, but they do not, or cannot, because of the underlying assumptions and conventions of curriculum designers, educational publishers, and textbook selection committees indicate them to their readers. So even

though experts agree that their subject matter in their domains is highly subjective and interpretive, the textbooks have a tone of objectivity and authoritativeness. This is a spurious objectivity, however--a pure formality. This impersonal voice has been a recent innovation in the history of textbooks, for at one time books were written in the personal voice.

In the world of academic writing (which includes textbooks) it is customary to dismiss style as mere decoration. However, Good (1985) does not believe style is "the spangles and ruffles sewn on sentences in a frivolous moment." Rather, he believes that

> . . . style is the cutting edge of substance. How something is said necessarily affects what is said and academics all tend to speak in the same droning voice. They bleach their personalities out of their prose to conform to some false, futile notion of scholarship. The result is supposed to be more objective. Often it is just pompous and unoriginal.
>
> True, every form of writing has its own particular requirements. No form of writing, however, should have as requirement that readers be bored to death. Yet if something is fun to read, it is suspect among academia. Only prose that is comatose can be scholarly.
>
> Good writing is always characterized by a strong voice, the illusion of a writer speaking to a reader. We need not . . . weaken standards to inject vitality into academic articles. Quite the contrary. We just need to write out of the fullness of our commitment to scholarship. Instead of relying on a big, bland institutional

> voice for an ersatz tone of omniscience, we must rely on our voices to establish our authority over material. To do anything else smacks of fraud . . .
>
> Language is one of the distinguishing marks of humanity. It left us above brute nature by igniting our imaginations and by preserving our culture. We forfeit a piece of our humanity when we write with no more personality than machines. Prose, to be alive, must reflect who we really are--academics, yes but lovers, rememberers, and dreamers, too.

This message to authors and publishers of academic and instructional texts makes clear some of the implications for an author on choosing whether or not to assume a primary role in a text.

The set of text characteristics that involves the personal voice, stance, and other qualities that leave an impression on readers is called metadiscourse. This is an important level of discourse concerned with the interpersonal function of language and is separate from the primary level of discourse which is concerned with the ideational function of language. All instructional texts have content propositions--the ideational aspect; however, some instructional texts also have attitudinal propositions that convey the author's relationship to the content, the text, and the readers--the interpersonal aspect (Halliday, 1974).

Metadiscourse is the author's discoursing about the discourse, a meta-communicative and pragmatic phenomenon. It includes directives given to readers so that they will understand not only what is said but also what is meant. Another way to explain it is to consider metadiscourse as an

author's overt presence in the text which is realized by various types of author commentaries and linguistic expressions. Used appropriately, metadiscourse can guide and direct readers through a text by helping them understand the author's perspective and the content propositions.

All of this implies that radical changes are needed to improve the quality of instructional texts. The following list of ten recommendations illustrate some of the changes needed if authors, publishers and educators are serious about improving learning.

1. Authors must write natural texts with real purposes rather than written-to-order texts that are only "speech acts to inform."
2. Authors must become storytellers for content-area textbooks as well as fiction. They must impart a sense of the author, ethos, and author/reader relationships adding metadiscourse/commentary to the text.
3. At an early age readers must see texts with authorial stance so that they can better understand all three functions of language (ideational, interpersonal, and textual), learn to produce texts with their own authorial stance, and critically evaluate their own and others' authorial stances. This implies, too, that controversial topics be discussed in textbooks and that students have opportunities to read reflectively and critically many authorial stances on the same topic.
4. Curriculum designers and school administrators must plan for multiple texts on a single topic or content area that are easily accessible to students. There may be a single textbook and

supplementary material or multiple textbooks, but students must be exposed at an early age to multiple stances and styles. Children become fixed in their notions of what a textbook should be if not given a wide range of text styles and stances early on.

5. Authors must become experts in the use of the rhetorical devices that realize and signal authorial stance.
6. Publishers as well as authors must realize that all texts persuade as they inform, some better than others, some more overtly than others. Higher level thinking, reading, and writing skills cannot develop until students also understand this and are given the opportunity to use textbooks with overt as well as the more subtle varieties of authorial stance. They should then be taught how to read critically and to evaluate these textbooks.
7. Readers must learn how to read on two levels--the primary discourse level of the propositional content and the secondary level of metadiscourse, meta-communication, and pragmatics. This is a higher level of comprehension.
8. Authors and publishers must realize that they have a higher goal than to convey the content matter in a textbook--the goal of teaching students how to learn the content and about the functions of language.
9. Textbooks must have real authors rather than committees of developers and sub-contracted textbook writers.

10. Textbooks must have authors who are experts and scholars in the subject matter or domain and who understand the nature of their readers and their responses to the textbook. This implies classroom observation, student interviews and feedback, and extensive field testing of textbooks.

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Table 1

Definition of Points of View in the Spectrums

I. First person (spoken) Face-to-Face, one or two-way communication

Interior Monologue--Someone spontaneously speaking to himself and overheard by the listener. The speaker speaks his thoughts aloud--his reactions to present and past events and reflections.

Dramatic Monologue--Someone speaking spontaneously to another and overheard by listeners where the speaker tells a particular story to a particular audience for a particular reason.

II. First person (written) Non-Face-to-Face, Two-Way Communication.

Letter Narration--A story made up of a bundle of letters written to and received from individuals. The letter is a written monologue, relatively spontaneous, written to a particular person for a particular reason.

Diary Narration--Someone's written reports of events and his state of mind almost as they happen, written on successive dates, not to anyone in particular.

Subjective Narration--A first person written account of a story by a character aware or unaware of his biases after a recent conclusion of an event.

Detached Autobiography--The narrator's written presentation to a neutral audience of his current, mature understanding of his earlier experiences.

Observer Narration--Author use of an observer or subordinate rather than main character to tell the written story, imitating first hand reporting.

Anonymous Narration, Single Character--Narrator as confidante and informer of the main character, presenting the inner life of a single character.

Table 1 (Cont'd)

III. Third Person (Written) Non-Face-to-Face

Anonymous Narration--Dual Characters--An interweaving of alternating presentation of the inner life of two characters (one may dominate) by a confidante, eyewitness, or chorus member narrator.

Anonymous Narration--Multiple Characters--Presentation of several points of view--the inner lives of several characters--framed by the author's single point of view.

Anonymous Narration--No Character--Presentation of story by a chorus member only--the narrator stays outside the minds of the characters and has only generalized publicly digested information.

Figure 1

Continua for Authored Texts

General Fiction Texts

A.

Unauthored folktale
Authorized by folk traditions

Authored tale with author as figure in the tale or commentator

School Non-Fiction Texts

B.

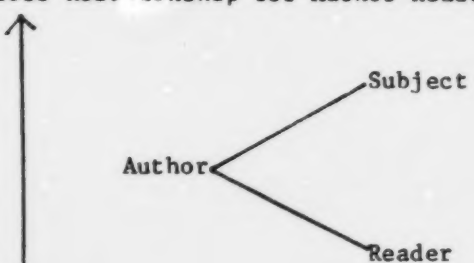
Unauthored textbooks
Authorized by subject authorities

Authored textbooks with author point of view

Figure 2

Point of View and Distance Spectrum for Texts

Close Relationship for Author-Reader and Author-Subject



Interior Monologue (first person)
Dramatic Monologue (first person and second person)
Letter Narration (first person - second person optional)
Diary Narration (first person)
Subjective Narration (first person)
Detached Autobiography (first person)
Observer Narration (first person)
Anonymous Narration -- single character point of view (first person)
Anonymous Narration -- dual character point of view (third person)
Anonymous Narration -- multiple character point of view (third person)
Anonymous Narration -- no character point of view (third person)

Distance Relationship for Author-Reader and Author-Subject